

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, independent claims 1, 2, 5 and 11 are amended for consistency with the specification and for clarity. Support for the amendments is provided in the specification, for example, on page 12, lines 22-24 and page 7, lines 1-2. Reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Haugland in the August 17, 2007 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the personal interview are incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 7, 8 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (i.e., Applicants' Fig. 2) (the AAPA) in view of Focke et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,603,800) (Focke) or over the AAPA in view of Focke and Ohba et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,592,276 B2) (Ohba); and rejects claims 5, 6, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the AAPA in view of Focke. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

As discussed during the August 17, 2007 personal interview, independent claims 1, 2 and 11 recite a printing apparatus (and independent claim 5 a continuous paper transport mechanism) that includes several features that are neither taught nor suggested in the AAPA. With reference to claim 1, for example, these features include:

- (1) a buffer unit operable to come into contact with a surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding back, and to separate from the surface of the continuous paper when the printing unit is printing, and
- (2) a control unit that controls the operation of the buffer unit, in correspondence with the operation of the back feeding unit, to come into contact with a surface of the continuous paper when the continuous

paper is feeding back, and that controls the operation of the buffer unit to separate from the surface of the continuous paper when the printing unit is printing.

The present application, which describes the AAPA, identifies these differences between the printing apparatus disclosed in the AAPA and the printing apparatus recited, for example, in independent claim 1. The specification also identifies several benefits of these features. As one example, the specification beginning on page 12, line 22, states that because the buffer unit "is spaced apart from the surface of the continuous paper 20 during printing, there is no factor producing skew in the continuous paper 20 between the paper-position restricting section 25 and the pair of frictionally transporting drive rollers 26. Hence, the drifting action does not occur, and paper skew does not occur, thereby making it possible to improve the printing accuracy." For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims are patentable over the AAPA.

Applicants respectfully submit that Focke does not overcome the above-noted deficiencies of the AAPA. Focke does not teach or suggest, for example, a printing apparatus having a buffer unit operable to come into contact with a surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding back, and to separate from the surface of the continuous paper when the printing unit is printing. Focke merely discloses a supply rocker 10 that allows the ends of two continuous rolls of packaging material, such as plastic or tin foil, to be joined so that the packaging machine can continue to run without any interruption in the delivery of packaging material (see, e.g., col. 2, lines 61-68 of Focke). As discussed during the personal interview, Focke fails to disclose an apparatus having a back feeding unit or a control unit that controls the operation of a buffer unit in correspondence with the operation of the back feeding unit when continuous paper is feeding back, as recited in the independent

claims. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims are patentable over the combination of the AAPA and Focke.

Applicants also submit that Ohba, which is relied upon in the Office Action as allegedly teaching locating a printing section downstream of feed rollers of a paper transport mechanism, fails to overcome the above-noted deficiencies of the AAPA and Focke.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of independent claims 1, 2, 5 and 11 should be withdrawn. Applicants also respectfully submit that claims 3, 4 and 6-10 should be allowed based on the dependency of each of these claims from claim 1, 2 or 5, as well as on the additional features recited in these claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Robert M. Jackson
Registration No. 46,796

JAO:RMJ/tls

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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